

# Stories of Impact

*A series highlighting achievements in disaster risk management initiatives*

## Mainstreaming Disaster Resilience in Vietnam



### RESULTS & ACHIEVEMENTS

- Assistance from GFDRR has leveraged significant investments in Vietnam, including \$1 billion in flood control and sanitation benefiting five major urban areas, \$140 million for climate-proofing transport investments, and \$500 million of government funds for scaling up a national community-based disaster risk management program in 6,000 additional communities. This assistance included the assessment of city drainage and flood control systems in the three coastal cities of Dong Hoi, Nha Trang and Qui Nhon, which helped the government of Vietnam formulate and prioritize \$125 million in additional infrastructure investments.
- GFDRR advised on the National Assembly's passage of the first-ever law on Natural Disaster Prevention and Control, which has been in effect since May 2014. It also supported the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment with a comprehensive diagnostic review of Vietnam's hydromet sector, which is informing the development of the 2015 national hydromet law.

**REGION: EAST ASIA AND PACIFIC**

**COUNTRY: VIETNAM**

**FOCUS AREA: RISK REDUCTION**

Vietnam is one of the most hazard-prone areas in the Asia-Pacific Region, with floods and storms often isolating communities and disrupting trade flows. The government, with support from the Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery (GFDRR) and the World Bank, has made important strides in building resilience against risk from natural disasters and climate change.

A combination of GFDRR's technical assistance and World Bank lending is mainstreaming disaster resilience in Vietnam with large scale impacts across a variety of sectors including transportation, urban and rural development, hydrological and meteorological monitoring services (hydromet), and water resource management.

## Context

Over the past two decades, extreme weather events have caused more than 13,000 deaths and property damage in excess of \$6.4 billion in Vietnam. More than 70% of the country's population is at risk from natural hazards, particularly the rural and urban poor. Recognizing the need to integrate disaster and climate resilience into development, the government of Vietnam has established a policy framework for disaster risk management (DRM) and climate change through a number of laws, strategies, action plans, and programs across governing levels and sectors.

## Approach

The government of Vietnam has successfully shifted from a reactive, post-disaster response approach to a more comprehensive disaster risk reduction strategy oriented around risk-informed planning and resilient infrastructure. This shift has been enhanced by a multi-sector approach, which has included engaging numerous ministries and provincial officials, as well as technical experts involved in integrated flood risk management, community-based DRM, agricultural production, and climate-proofing transport networks.

Key activities included GFDRR-financed transformative pilot studies, policy analysis, and capacity building programs. For example, officials from the Ministry of Transport and local government officials from over 30 provinces were trained on mainstreaming disaster and climate resilience into rural road construction, including design guidelines.

In addition, provincial agencies and communities now have the capability to plan for and respond to disasters more effectively. Early warning evacuation systems and community scale mitigation measures will benefit more than 210,000 villagers across 30 communities.

## LESSONS LEARNED

**Engineering measures alone are not sufficient to tackle disaster risks.** While infrastructure investments, such as dikes, are critical, they must be paired with community engagement, training, strong design standards, material specifications, quality control, early warning, spatial planning, maintenance management, and green solutions. For example, development of community DRM training manuals and resilient standards for small-scale public infrastructure have been rolled out to 230 communes under a rural development project.

**Integrated spatial planning is needed to counter trends that are driving urban flood risk.** Optimization of upstream reservoir operation, land subsidence control, and prevention of tidal flooding and rainfall inundation in the context of climate change needs to be integrated into spatial development planning of rapidly growing cities, which are often hindered by uncontrolled development in hazard-prone areas.

## Next Steps

Building on existing disaster resilient infrastructure and community-level groundwork, GFDRR is looking to support the implementation of Vietnam's new DRM law, including the development of a government-led platform to coordinate the financing and implementation of DRM investments. This requires the strengthening of policy and institutional frameworks and will be complemented by targeted activities to improve the resilience of specific sectors, such as energy and irrigation, as well as dam safety regulations.

*"If disaster happens, the Women's Association now has a disaster risk management plan to reduce our loss. We cooperate with the authorities to relocate people from high risk areas in order to minimize the loss of property and life."*

—Nguyen Thi Le Hang, Chairwoman of Women's Association, Quang Binh Province

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\*All figures in US Dollars